



Concussion Prevention

There is no absolute way to prevent a concussion. In light of that, there are many ways in which we can minimize the frequency of concussions as well as the duration. These aspects including playing your sport or activity in a safe environment with adherence to the rules, emphasis on reporting and proper initial management if a head injury occurs and counseling on style of play and safe techniques as part of their sport.

Injury Prevention in General with Sport

It has become apparent that with the high level of intensity in youth and adult sports injuries are becoming more common. Following the rules of the sport in practice including limiting head contact, illegal play in practice and the act of purposefully injuring a teammate in practice is imperative. We can also reduce overall injuries - including concussion - when we focus on positive behavior in sport. This includes encouraging kids to keep the fun in their sport and having communication with coaches/parents if their enjoyment in the sport is fading. Discussing positive messaging from coaches and parents can reduce injury rates. Finally, coaches being aware that practice intensity and duration can lead to higher injury rates can help keep our injuries at a minimum.

Concussion Prevention

Creating a safe sport culture and environment is imperative for our athletes. A safe sport culture includes teaching proper positioning and style with recurrent emphasis on the correct technique to both excel at the sport yet remain safe. In our practice we have seen positive examples of this including proper heads up football tackling and rugby style tackling. In volleyball, we saw a decrease in concussions when our volleyball rolls changed to a style resembling a barrel roll as compared to the legs going directly over the head. In soccer reducing the amount of headers during practice - especially long ball headers - can allow for less head injuries. Finally, we also discovered that keeping the soccer ball at a proper inflation (8.5-15.6 psi for NCAA) has reduced head injuries. These small changes create a lower risk sport yet can retain all of the teaching that is associated with a successful team.

Concussion Reporting

Concussion duration can be reduced and prolonged concussion as well as second impact syndrome can be prevented with multiple areas of understanding for coaches and athletes. Making sure our teams are aware of what a concussion is and to remove themselves from play if they feel they may have a concussion. Studies have shown that athletes returned into play with a concussion typically take longer for the concussion to resolve than those removed immediately from play. Athletes should feel comfortable reporting symptoms and get support from their teammates if a concussion is sustained. We understand that athletes may minimize the importance of concussion and symptoms are unreported due to fear of losing their position or fear of what others may think. A culture that minimizes these fears will result in less head injuries and faster return to play for the athletes.

For more information and sport specific prevention visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_prevention.html